

We claim:

1. An improved method for converting tea leaves and green tea into black tea comprising the steps of:
  - selecting a measure of tea leaves;
  - moistening said tea leaves with an aqueous tyrosinase solution;
  - exposing said tea leaves, once moistened, to an oxidizing agent;
  - drying said tea leaves to derive black tea.
2. The method of Claim 1 wherein the moisture content of said tea leaves after said moistening is no greater than approximately 40% of the weight of said tea leaves prior to said moistening.
3. The method of Claim 1 wherein said oxidizing agent is an oxygen-containing gas.
4. The method of Claim 2 wherein said oxidizing agent is an oxygen-containing gas.
5. The method of Claim 1 wherein said exposing of said tea leaves, once moistened, to an oxidizing agent, occurs at between approximately 20°C and 50°C.

6. The method of Claim 2 wherein said exposing of said tea leaves, once moistened, to an oxidizing agent, occurs at between approximately 20°C and 50°C.